
**HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW BOARD
STAFF REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION**

Landmark/District:	U Street Historic District	<input type="checkbox"/> Agenda
Address:	1310 T Street, NW	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Consent
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Concept
Meeting Date:	June 28, 2012	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Alteration
Case Number:	12-424	<input type="checkbox"/> New Construction
Staff Reviewer:	Steve Callcott	<input type="checkbox"/> Demolition
		<input type="checkbox"/> Subdivision

Owners Martin Ditto and Robert Bailey of Ditto Residential seek conceptual design review for a rear and rooftop addition to a contributing rowhouse in the U Street Historic District.

Property Description

1310 T Street is a two story brick rowhouse with a raised English basement. The façade is of common brick and features a full-height rounded bay with two (rather than the more typical three) windows, a corbelled brick cornice, and a decorative cast iron stair. The building was capped with an unusual brick crenolation detail evocative of Medieval castle architecture, which has been partially removed.

The house was constructed as part of a coordinated terrace of eight houses in 1876. A newspaper article from the period lists the builder as D.A. Graff. The row consists of two different house designs in an A-B-A-B-B-A-B-A configuration. The round-bay houses are capped with an unusual brick crenolation detail evocative of medieval castle architecture, and a three-sided bay type with a bracketed wood Italianate cornice. While the battlements have been partially removed on the subject house, they remain on the others in the row.

Proposal

The project calls for a two-story addition to be constructed in the rear which would project approximately 14 feet from the existing rear of the house. The addition would be clad in stucco on the sides with a rear wall clad entirely in glass and spandrel panels in a metal framing system. A partial third story would be constructed on the roof, set back approximately 12 feet from the front façade, and set back 3 feet from the rear wall of the new rear addition. The existing one-story brick garage, much altered from its original two-story carriage house appearance, would be retained and rehabilitated.

Evaluation

The proposal is not dissimilar to other projects for rear additions and partial floors added atop contributing rowhouses that have been approved by the Board. While the houses in this immediate row have not been extended with rear additions – the proposed addition would extend beyond the houses on either side of it – the Board has not required that rear additions maintain a

uniform setback and the proposed addition is the same size and projection as the house two doors down at 1306. The addition is subordinate in size and height to the house, and the stucco side wall material is consistent with the predominant masonry vocabulary of houses in the U Street Historic District.

While the rear wall has a much higher percentage of glass than is characteristic in the historic district, it will not impact the public perception of the house or the historic district; for additions and alterations that don't affect the character of historic district, the Board has supported this type of design flexibility. The Board's window standards (DCMR Title 10A, Chapter 23) welcome contemporary fenestration in rear additions to historic buildings, stating:

2311.2 Windows in rear additions to historic buildings should generally reflect the less formal design that is characteristic at the rear of most historic structures. Alternatively, windows in an addition distinguished by deliberate contrast should be compatible in scale and character with the historic building overall.

2311.4 This guidance is intended to promote design compatibility with historic buildings and districts, rather than to discourage good contemporary design or creative architectural expression.

The roof addition has been designed to ensure that it is not visible from any perspective view on T Street. A mock-up was prepared and reviewed by the HPO at the property on June 15th, and the drawings reflect minor modifications that the applicants have made to shift the location, roof pitch and height of the addition to ensure that it will not be visible or affect the building's roof profile. The applicants have also agreed to reconstruct the missing battlements atop the roof, an unusual feature found on other houses in the row, which will also have the effect of raising the roof line and providing further screening to the top floor. The modest set back of the roof addition in the rear improves the compatibility in relating to the two story houses on each side.

The Board has recently approved similar partial roof additions with substantial setbacks from the front to ensure the addition is not visible from perspective pedestrian views and modest rear setbacks at 1245 C Street, SE, 14 8th Street, SE, 243 8th Street, NE, and 22 3rd Street, NE.

Recommendation

The HPO recommends that the Review Board:

- Find the concept compatible with the character of the historic district and consistent with the purposes of the preservation act;
- Condition approval on no parapet walls being added as a response to potential code requirements that would raise the height of the roof addition, and that roofing on the third floor addition be fire-rated; and
- Final approval be delegated to staff.